

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Remarks at a Campaign Rally in Toledo, Ohio

September 3, 2012

The President. Hello, Toledo! Thank you, thank you. It is good to be in Toledo, Ohio.

Audience members. Obama! Obama! Obama! Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you so much. Now, first of all, I've got to say thank you for Kenyatta, for that outstanding introduction. Give Kenyatta a big round of applause. I was listening backstage, and I thought I heard a little preaching going on there. *[Laughter]* Folks in the crowd were going "yeah", "wow." *[Laughter]* So Kenyatta can talk, no doubt about it.

It is great to see so many good friends——

Audience members. We love you!

The President. I love you back. It's great to see so many good friends who work so hard on behalf of working families every day. We've got Sherrod Brown, one of the best Senators in the country. Marcy Kaptur, one of the best Congresswomen in the country. We've got my friend and your friend, daughter of a Teamster, our Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis in the house. We've got your outstanding UAW President Bob King in the house. President of the AFL–CIO, Rich Trumka is here. And the President of the National Education Association, Dennis Van Roekel.

So we've got some working people in the house here. And to everybody who is working hard each and every day, Happy Labor Day. Happy Labor Day.

Audience member. We got your back, Obama.

The President. Thank you. Now, for those of you who have got a seat, feel free to take a seat. I've got some things to say. I've got some things to say here. For those of you who don't have a seat, make sure to bend your knees a little bit. We don't want you fainting. Sometimes, folks are standing too long, they drop off. *[Laughter]*

Now, we're on our way to our convention in Charlotte this week. But I wanted to stop here in Toledo to spend this day with you—a day that belongs to the working men and women of America—teachers and factory workers, construction workers and students, and families and small-business owners. And I know we've got some proud autoworkers in the house helping to bring Toledo back.

After all, it's working folks like you who fought for jobs and opportunity for generations of American workers. It's working people like you who helped to lay the cornerstones of middle class security, things that people now sometimes take for granted, but weren't always there: the 40 hour work week, weekends, paid leave, pensions, the minimum wage, health care, Social Security, Medicare. Those things happened because working people organized and mobilized.

It is unions like yours that helped to forge the basic bargain of this country: the bargain that built the greatest middle class and the most prosperous country and the most prosperous economy that the world has ever known.

And you know what that bargain is, because it's a simple one. It's a bargain that says if you work hard, if you're responsible, then your work should be rewarded. That if you put in enough

effort, you should be able to find a job that pays the bills. You should afford a home to call your own. That you'll have health care you can count on if you get sick. That you can put away enough to retire, maybe take a vacation once in a while—nothing fancy, but you can enjoy your friends and your family. And most importantly, then you can provide your children with an education to make sure that they do even better than you did.

It's an American promise that says no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, no matter where you come from, no matter what your last name is, no matter who you love, you can make it here if you try. And that's what we're fighting for, Toledo. That's what's at stake in this election. And that's why I'm running for a second term as President of the United States of America.

Now, last week, the other party gave their sales pitch at their convention down in Florida.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo, vote. *[Laughter]* Vote. And I have to say, it was something to see. Despite all the challenges that we face in this new century, we saw 3 straight days of an agenda out of the last century. It was a rerun. You might as well have watched it on black-and-white TV with some rabbit ears on there. *[Laughter]* It should have been on "Nick at Nite." *[Laughter]*

Now, if you didn't DVR it, let me give you a basic recap of what they said. The economy is bad. It's all Obama's fault. And Governor Romney has the secret to creating jobs and growing the economy. That's a basic summary. They spent the most time on me. *[Laughter]* They were talking about me. *[Laughter]*

And there was a lot of "hard truths" and "bold choices," they said, but nobody ever bothered to tell you what they really were. And when Governor Romney had his chance to let you in on the secret sauce of job creation—*[laughter]*—he did not offer you a single new idea. It was just a retread of the same old policies that have been sticking it to the middle class for years.

And then, after the convention, Governor Romney came here to Ohio, and he said he's going to be the coach that leads America to a "winning season." The problem is everybody has already seen his economic playbook. We know what's in it.

On first down, he hikes taxes by nearly \$2,000 on the average family with kids in order to pay for a massive tax cut for multimillionaires. That's on first down. It sounds like unnecessary roughness to me. *[Laughter]*

On second down, he calls an audible and undoes reforms that are there to prevent another financial crisis and bank bailout. He wants to get rid of rules that are there to protect our air and our water and workers' rights and protections to make sure health care is there for you when you get sick.

And then, on third down, he calls for a Hail Mary, ending Medicare as we know it by giving seniors a voucher that leaves them to pay any additional cost out of their pocket. There's a flag on the play: loss of up to an additional \$6,400 a year for the same benefits you get now.

That's their playbook. That's their economic plan. And I've got one piece of advice for you about the Romney-Ryan game plan, Ohio: Punt it away! It won't work. It won't win the game. You don't need that coach. That's a losing season.

Now, there was one person at Governor Romney's convention last week who wasn't entirely on script. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Boo!

The President. No, no—because while they were busy telling folks how bad everything is, your Governor, John Kasich——

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote! [*Laughter*]

The President. John Kasich stood up there and told everybody that Ohio is now number one in the Midwest in job creation, fourth best in America, which got folks kind of confused, because if it's all Obama's fault and nothing is going right, what's going on in Ohio?

Now, I guess the theory was that it's all the Governor's doing. But I think we need to refresh his memory, because a lot of those jobs are autoworker jobs like yours. The American auto industry supports one in eight jobs in this State. And just a few years ago, when the auto industry was flatlining, what was in his and Governor Romney's playbook? "Let Detroit go bankrupt." You remember that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Now, think about what that would have meant not just for Ohio, but for America. If we had turned our backs on you, if America had thrown in the towel like that, GM and Chrysler wouldn't exist today. The suppliers and the distributors that get their business from these companies would have died off, too. Then even Ford could have gone down as well. Production shut down. Factories shuttered. Once proud companies chopped up and sold off in scraps. And all of you—the men and women who built these companies with your own hands—you would have been benched for good. That's not a good play. We didn't run that play.

More than 1 million Americans across the country would have lost their jobs in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. In communities across the Midwest, it would have been another great depression. And it's not just the workers themselves; think about everybody who depends on you: schoolteachers, small-business owners, the server in the diner who knows your order before you walk in, the bartender who knows your order before you walk in. Their livelihoods were at stake as well, and so was something else.

How many autoworkers here worked the assembly line, but your dads and your granddads, maybe your mom, grandmas worked on that same line? How many people are second or third or fourth generation? How many of you have sons and daughters who hope to work on those same assembly lines?

These jobs are worth more than just a paycheck. They're a source of pride. They're a ticket into a middle class life. These companies are worth more than just the cars that they build. They're a symbol of America's innovation. They're a source of our manufacturing might. If that is not worth fighting for, then what is?

Ohio, we're not about to take a knee and do nothing. We weren't going to give up on your jobs and your families and your communities. We weren't going to let Detroit go bankrupt or Lordstown go bankrupt or Toledo go bankrupt. I stood with American workers. I stood with American manufacturing. I believed in you. I bet on you. I'll make that bet any day of the

week. And because of that bet, 3 years later, that bet is paying off for America. Three years later, the American auto industry has come roaring back, nearly 250,000 new jobs.

So it's a little funny watching Governor Romney and Governor Kasich and others just try to rewrite history now that you're back on your feet. These are the folks who said, if we went forward with our plan, then—I'm quoting here—"you can kiss the American automotive industry goodbye." Now they're saying it was their idea all along. *[Laughter]* Seriously. Or what they're saying is, well, the problem is that you, the workers, made out like bandits in this whole thing; that we did what we did because it was all about paying back unions. Really? I mean, even by the standards of political campaigns, that's a lot of you know what.

Workers made some of the biggest sacrifices. About 700,000 retirees saw a reduction in the health benefits they had earned. Hours were reduced, pay and wages scaled back. You gave up promises made to you over the years for the sake and the survival of your fellow workers and their families and the company. You made sacrifices. Which is why I don't understand why these folks have the nerve to talk about you like you're some greedy special interest that needs to be beaten down.

After all that unions have done to build and protect the middle class, they were standing up there at their convention saying you're responsible for the problems we face. Their plan says the best way to help workers is to roll back workers' rights, to overturn laws that make sure construction workers get a fair wage, to blame teachers and firefighters and police officers and other public servants for our economic challenges instead of what happened on Wall Street and a historic financial collapse.

So, Toledo, what you need to know is this: When they're trying to take your collective bargaining rights away, when they're trying to pass so-called "right to work" laws that really mean right to work for less and less, you should know this isn't about economics. This is about politics.

This notion that we should have let the auto industry die and that we should pursue antiworker policies in the hopes that unions like yours will unravel, it's part of the same old you're-on-your-own, top-down philosophy that says we should just leave everybody to fend for themselves.

Now, on Thursday night, I'm going to offer you what I believe is a better path forward: a path that's going to grow this economy and create more good jobs and strengthen the middle class. And the good news is, starting on October 2, Ohio gets its say because you get to vote early. You can choose which path we take. You could choose their plan.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. Don't boo——

Audience members. Vote!

The President. You can choose to give massive new tax cuts to folks who have already made it. Or you can choose my plan: to keep taxes low for every American who is in the middle class and every American who is striving to get into that middle class.

Four years ago, I promised to cut taxes by a total—for middle class families, and I have cut taxes by a total of about \$3,600 for the typical family. And now I'm running to make sure that taxes aren't raised a single dime on the first \$250,000 of any family's income. Now, that's 98 percent of Americans. It may be 99.9 percent of this auditorium. Your taxes won't go up,

because my belief is you need relief. I don't need relief. Mitt Romney doesn't need relief. He needs it less than me. *[Laughter]*

But that's a choice in this election. You can choose whether we give up new jobs and new industries to countries like China, or whether we fight to keep those jobs in States like Ohio. Unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving tax breaks to companies that are shipping jobs overseas. I want to give those tax breaks to companies that are investing right here in Toledo, right here in the United States, all across Ohio, all across the Midwest.

You can decide whether borrowing money from your parents is an answer when a young person asks how they're going to go to college. You heard about that, right? This young college student says, how can I get some help going to college? He says, well, you need to borrow money from your parents. *[Laughter]* Now, I guess that's one path. That's one approach.

I've got a different approach that says let's make sure Americans once again lead the world in educating our kids and training our workers for the jobs of tomorrow. And that means let's hire more great teachers, especially in math and science. Let's help more folks go to community colleges to get trained in the skills that employers are hiring for right now. Because the truth is, some sort of higher education, whether it's 4-year or a 2-year technical school—some form of higher education—that's not a luxury anymore. That is an economic necessity that every family should be able to afford. And that's what I'm going to be fighting for. That's what I'm going to be fighting for.

Now, Ohio, you can choose an energy plan like the other guy is offering that's written by and for the oil companies. Or you can choose an all-of-the-above strategy for American energy, which means we drill for more oil, we mine for more coal. But it also means that we're going after the new energy sources of the future.

Now, my opponent said renewable energy sources are imaginary. The folks here in Toledo manufacturing solar panels might disagree with that. These jobs aren't a fad; they're not imaginary. They're our future. And unlike my opponent, I want to stop giving a \$4 billion a year taxpayer subsidy to big oil companies that are making money every time you go to the pump and I want to use that money to invest in homegrown energy sources that have never been more promising and are creating jobs right here in Ohio.

It's up to you whether we go back to the old health care system that let insurance companies decide when to cover you and when to cover you and drop you when you needed it most. But I think we should keep moving forward with the new health care law that's already cutting costs and covering more people and saving lives. They call it Obamacare. It's true, I care. It's true.

I guess the other side's plan is the "Romney-doesn't-care" plan. *[Laughter]* But now is not the time to refight the battles of the last 4 years. We need to move forward.

You get to decide what the future of the war in Afghanistan is. Last week, did you notice Governor Romney did not say a word about our troops who are in harm's way over there? And because of my plan, 33,000 of them will have come home by the end of this month.

He said ending the war in Iraq was tragic. I think it was the right thing to do. I said we'd end that war, and we did. I said we'd go after Al Qaida; we did. I said we'd take out bin Laden; we did.

Our troops are out of Iraq. We're bringing them home from Afghanistan. And as long as I'm Commander in Chief, we will serve our veterans as well as they've served us, because

nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their heads when they come home. That's why I'm running for a second term.

So we've got some big choices we've got to make. And the other side is going to spend the next 2 months, they're fighting back with everything they've got. They're going to give you an avalanche of attack ads and insults and distraction. And they may massage the truth a little bit. And it will be supported with \$10 million checks from wealthy donors. And they know that even if you don't buy into their plan, even if you don't vote for them, they're thinking, well, maybe we'll discourage people. We'll get folks so disillusioned by all these negative ads, all this negativity, that you'll just decide to sit this one out.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. But you know what, I'm counting on something different. I'm counting on you. I'm counting on you. If you're not registered to vote, then you've got to go to gottaregister.com. Now, that's not "got-to-register.com." This is "gotta"—"g-o-t-t-a-register.com."

If you want to find out how to vote early, starting on October 2, then you need to go to gottavote.com. That's not "got-to-vote.com," that's "gotta vote"—[laughter]—"gotta register," "gotta vote"—because we've got a whole lot of more work to do.

We've got more good jobs to create. We've got more good cars to build. We've got more schools to upgrade and more great teachers to hire and more young people to send to college. And we've got more troops we've got to bring home and more veterans we've got to take care of and more doors of opportunity that we've got to open up for everybody who is willing to walk through them. That's what's at stake in this election. That's why I'm asking for your vote.

That's why I need you to knock on doors. That's why I need you to get on the phone. I need you to talk to your friends. I need you to talk to your neighbors. I need you to stand with me, Ohio. And if we win Toledo, we will win Ohio. And if we win Ohio, we'll win this election. And if we win this election, we will finish what we started, and we will remind the world why the United States of America is the greatest nation on Earth.

Thank you. God bless you. And God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at Scott High School. In his remarks, he referred to Kenyatta Jones, member, UAW Local 14; and Republican Presidential nominee W. Mitt Romney and Vice Presidential nominee Paul D. Ryan.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Campaign rallies :: Toledo, OH.

Locations: Toledo, OH.

Names: Brown, Sherrod C. ; Jones, Kenyatta; Kaptur, Marcia. C ; Kasich, John R.; King, Bob; Romney, W. Mitt; Ryan, Paul D.; Solis, Hilda L.; Trumka, Richard L.; Van Roekel, Dennis.

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Global competitiveness; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Energy : National energy policy; Energy : Oil and gas industry :: Subsidies, elimination; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Holidays and special observances : Labor Day; Iraq : U.S. and

coalition forces, withdrawal; Labor issues : Unions : Labor movement and organized labor; Labor issues : Unions :: American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); Labor issues : Unions :: National Education Association; Labor issues : Unions :: United Auto Workers (UAW); Labor, Department of : Secretary; Ohio : Democratic Party events; Ohio : Energy, alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Ohio : Governor; Ohio : President's visits; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist group; Veterans : Benefits.

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